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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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A-ONE #1629 07/18/14

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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More tornado warnings here in the Northeast this past week - very scary! Fortunately, things didn't materialize as they did the week earlier with tornado-like strikes close to my area. However, the weather was still severe and did quite a bit of damage in surrounding towns.

Many thanks this week go out our faithful news contributor, Fred Horvat. There are weeks when we just simply have little to offer our readers, and all of the sudden, Fred fills my inbox with newsfeeds and articles. This week, he sent us numerous links to a variety of Atari-related items, included in this week's issue. Of course, we also provide credit to AtariUser and AtariAge - the sources for these articles. Thanks everyone!

Until next time...

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Courtesy of Atari User and AtariAge:
http://atariuser.com

Atari User is aimed squarely at the Atari enthusiast and we cover all the Atari consoles, and computers.

The magazine provides features on Atari history, classic Atari hardware, great software titles from the past and we take a look at computer and gaming industry as it was back in the eighties and nineties.

We also give important and vital coverage to new Atari software and hardware developments. New homebrew games and hardware are being released all the time and our aim is to support the Atari community by giving the homebrew developes the coverage they need to get their new products out there.

The magazine is currently produced in PDF format for online distribution and can easily be printed (A4 Size) once downloaded. As our number of subscribers continues to ramp up we ll consider the move to a more conventional print format.

Being available online and PDF has several advantages. You, the reader,

get to buy and download the latest issue right away without trawling through newsagents or waiting for the mail to arrive. PDF allows us to incorporate direct links to websites of interest right from inside an article.

There are lots of exciting developments planned for Atari User and we hope you ll share the ride with us.

Single Issues are $4.25 US
12 Issue Subscription is $34.95 US a 30% Discount!

"Atari Corp. - Business Is War" Cover Released

The noted video game historian team of Marty Goldberg and Curt Vendel, co-authors of the popular book Atari Inc. Business is Fun, will tell the story of Atari Corporation in their upcoming book "Atari Corp. - Business Is War." In honor of the 30th anniversary of Jack Tramiel's founding of Atari Corporation, they have released the book's stunning cover in advance to video game and computer fans alike. Hand painted by artist Lukas Ketner, the cover personifies the company, its products and history.

Our intent was to really have a cover that embodies the company at a glance," said Goldberg. "The iconic Jack Tramiel and his sons Sam, Leonard and Gary surrounded by the now legendary products they introduced to us. At the same time, the seriousness and competitive business nature Jack and his companies were known for had to be shown. Lukas captured it all perfectly and in a style that anyone who grew up with Atari should recognize!"

You can read the full press release in our online forum, where you can also view a larger image of the upcoming book's cover.

Antic Podcast, Episode 12 Now Availble

Episode 12 of The Atari 8-bit Podcast is now available. This latest episode features:
Interviews:
Fred Thorlin, former director of Atari Program Exchange
Bill Kendrick, father of Atari Party
William Culver, co-host of the Colecovisions podcast
Will Atari be a hardware giant again?
Software of the Month: Star Raiders
Hardware of the Month: MyIDEII from AtariMax
ANTIC, The Atari 8-bit Podcast focuses on Atari 8-bit computers (800, XL, XE), and is hosted by Randy Kindig, Kevin Savetz, and Brad Arnold. You can find the current and past episodes of ANTIC on iTunes, the Apple Podcast App, and at www.AtariPodcast.com. You can discuss the podcast in our Atari 8-bit Computers Forum.

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - ’Grand Theft Auto V’ by November?
Video-Game Stocks Rise for June!
Jaguar Protector: Resurgence!
And more!

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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

’Grand Theft Auto V’ Could Be on PC by November

A retailer leak indicates that mid-November is when "GTA V" will arrive on PC and, therefore, Xbox One and PlayStation 4.

A little under 14 months after the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 editions made their record sales debuts, "GTA V" could be on PC and, most likely, Xbox One and PS4, according to an online retailer’s premature listing.

The PC version, along with Xbox One and PlayStation 4 editions, has been announced for release before the end of 2014, though developer Rockstar and publisher Take-Two Interactive have not yet been more specific than that.

Instead, publicity material has concentrated on the improvement in fidelity over the already well-acclaimed crime tale "Grand Theft Auto V" on Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3, released September 17, 2013.

But a date applied by Scandinavian and UK online retailer Coolshop had the title releasing for Windows machines on November 14, the same week as Xbox One retrospective "Halo: The Master Chief Collection" and driving game "The Crew," and ten days after "Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare."

As word spread, the listing was swiftly amended to the standard calendar year placeholder of December 31, but not before PC Gamer captured the evidence in screenshot form.

If correct, and applicable to the new consoles as well as PC, the timing would be advantageous for Rockstar and Take-Two, avoiding clashes with big name annual franchises like "Assassin’s Creed" and "Call of Duty," while assuring good positioning for "GTA V" alongside any end-of-year console purchases.

Video-Game Stocks Rise After NPD Reports Better-Than-Expected June Retail Sales

Video game stocks moved higher today after the NPD Group published a report yesterday, which showed that physical video game retail sales for

the month of June came in higher than what many analysts had expected.

Last month s statistics revealed that total sales in the US video game industry rose 24% from June 2013 to reach $735 million. The gains were mainly led by higher sales of video-game hardware, which jumped 106% to $293 million on the back of a 200% rise in new-generation console sales including Microsoft s Xbox One and Sony s PlayStation 4. The hefty rise in console sales offset the decline in portable hardware and accessory sales.

But the real driver for these stocks today was that despite a year-over-year fall of 3% to $286.8 million last month, sales of video game software were higher than what analysts had forecast. Several analysts noted that June 2013 had a far stronger lineup of launch titles, and last month s decline was largely expected. The favorable numbers were further boosted on data that showed software sales rose 4% from May.

Further details in the NPD report showed that Ubisoft s new title, Watch Dogs was the leader among video game title sales, followed by Nintendo s MarioKart. Electronic Arts FIFA 14 title was boosted by the World Cup, coming in at the number five spot.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Courtesy of Atari User and AtariAge:
http://atariuser.com

Atari Jaguar Protector: Resurgence

Invaders have jammed our newly deployed missile silos, meteor storms strike at will, and scouting reports indicate the deadly Vorton obliterates everything in its path. Will you be the next Protector?

Songbird Productions has announced that Protector: Resurgence is coming to the Atari Jaguar CD in September 2014! Resurgence is an expansion CD for your Protector SE cartridge, and features 24 new waves, new galaxy and ground graphics, new ship graphic, new enemies, and more. A limited 50-disc run will be made available at the Classic Gaming Expo in Las Vegas, including some graphics and audio unique to that disc, followed by the general release of the game.

You can discuss Protector: Resurgence with other AtariAge members and Songbird Productions in our Atari Jaguar Forum.

Stella Version 4.0 Released

A significant new release of the Atari 2600 emulator Stella, version 4.0, has been released today. Stella is a multi-platform Atari 2600 VCS emulator released under the GNU General Public License (GPL), and versions have been released for a wide variety of operating systems. Stella allows you to enjoy the large library of Atari 2600 titles on your computer, and it's an exceptional tool for anyone creating new homebrew games for the 2600. Stella is actively maintained by Stephen Anthony, who continues to make improvements and add new features to the emulator.

Changes in this new release of Stella include:

Ported Stella to SDL2, which brings many new features. Among the largest improvements is native hardware acceleration support for Windows (Direct3D) and Linux/OSX (OpenGL). It is also now possible to port Stella to iOS and Android devices using OpenGLES. Hardware acceleration is now required, which means up-to-date drivers are needed. Software rendering is still present, but is somewhat unoptimized and unsupported going forward.
Fullscreen video modes now use the desktop resolution. Switching to fullscreen and back to windowed mode no longer rearranges icons on your desktop.
TIA TV effects are now available in all video modes, since hardware acceleration is a requirement.
Added a much more detailed view of cart extended RAM to a new debugger tab. Special thanks to SpiceWare for this implementation.
Added preliminary support for 'DASH' bankswitching scheme by A. Davie.
The AtariVox and SaveKey controllers now have the ability in the debugger to completely erase the virtual EEPROM data.
Added 'savesnap' debugger prompt command, and also associated context menu item to the debugger TIA output area. This saves the current TIA image to a PNG file.
Added 'hidecursor' commandline option, which allows to completely disable showing the mouse cursor (useful on systems that don't have a mouse).
Removed 'uipalette' option, as the original palette is no longer supported.
Updated included PNG library to latest stable version.

You can visit the Stella website to download the latest version for your platform. If you actively use Stella, making a donation will help ensure it's continued development. To view a detailed list of all the changes, as well as discuss the emulator with Stella's primary developer, please visit our Emulation Forum.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Microsoft Starts Taking EU 'Right To Be Forgotten' Requests

Microsoft Corp on Wednesday started taking requests from individuals in Europe who want to be removed from its Bing search engine results following a court judgment in May guaranteeing the "right to be forgotten."

Microsoft, whose Bing search engine has 2.5 percent of the European search market, follows market leader Google Inc which complied with the ruling in May, and started removing some search results last month.

The Luxembourg-based Court of Justice of the European Union in May ordered Google to remove a link to a 15-year-old newspaper article about a Spanish man’s bankruptcy, effectively upholding people’s "right to be forgotten" on the Internet.

The ruling, which affects the EU’s 500 million citizens, requires that Internet search services remove information deemed "inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant." Failure to do so can result in fines. It only applies to EU countries, meaning links that have been removed in Europe will still appear in search results elsewhere, including the United States.

Microsoft’s form, available on its Bing website (https://www.bing.com/webmaster/tools/eu-privacy-request), is a four-part questionnaire. Microsoft advises those interested in completing the questionnaire that it will "help us to consider the balance between your individual privacy interest and the public interest in protecting free expression and the free availability of information, consistent with European law."

The form states that making a request does not guarantee that a particular search result will be blocked.

European privacy concerns, and tech companies’ sensitivity to them, have exploded in the past year after former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden revealed details of mass U.S. surveillance programs involving European citizens and some heads of state.

Google, Canon, Dropbox and Others Pool Patents to Ward Off Trolls

A coalition of technology companies large and small has created a sort of arms-control treaty to prevent future abuses of their intellectual property.

Among Google, Canon, SAP, Newegg, Dropbox and Asana, there are nearly 300,000 patent assets on the line. But the companies aren t licensing all of each others patents today. Instead, by agreeing to join the License on Transfer network, they promise to grant licenses to one another whenever one of those patents is sold.

The point is to defang patents before they get into the hands of patent trolls, who use intellectual property to extort money from other companies rather than make products.

LOT is the followup to a call by Google last year for companies to join together to fight trolls. It s open to additional membership.

Google legal director Eric Schulman, who led the initiative, said it is

particularly aimed at the fact that while troll suits are at an all-time high more than 60 percent of patent litigation in 2012 was started by trolls, up from 20 percent in 2006 at the same time, more than 70 percent of the patents used by trolls were generated by companies that are still operating, according to RPX Research.

That is to say, patent trolls aren t just gathering up patents abandoned by failed companies and independent inventors. The defendants in these cases are often the very companies that pay for the research and development that gets patented in the first place.

While patent reform is going nowhere in the U.S. government, this is one of a few efforts to change the system by companies that feel they have to patent their employees work in order to play defense against intellectual property aggressors. For instance, Twitter has committed to giving its inventors more control over how their patents are used.

And while companies have somewhat altruistically banded together on patents before for instance, around the Linux operating system LOT is different because it is portfolio-wide and it only applies to patents that are transferred, so participating companies could still use their patents against each other while they own them.

The appeal of LOT, said Dropbox IP counsel Brett Alten, is that it s an inclusive model that doesn t strongly favor large or small companies. Large companies are most likely to sell or transfer assets out of the network. Small companies will be basically inoculated from that kind of threat. And large companies benefit because when small companies fail they often sell patents to trolls.

The small starter group includes the productivity startup Asana, which only has three accepted patents and has never faced a patent troll threat. Co-founder Dustin Moskovitz described the move as an assurance that the company s defensive patent strategy wouldn t change. It was really important to our employees that we did something that was more than good intentions, he said.

Civil Rights And Media Groups To FCC: Reclassify Internet Service Providers As Common Carriers

On Friday, the Voices for Internet Freedom coalition filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on behalf of more than 50 civil rights, human rights, community-based and media organizations in support of strong Net Neutrality rules that protect the digital rights of communities of color.

In the filing, the groups called on the FCC to treat Internet Service Providers (ISPs) as common carriers, which would allow the Commission to reestablish its legal authority to adopt Net Neutrality rules that prevent telecommunications companies from blocking, discriminating against and interfering with Web traffic. The coalition also called on the agency to ensure Net Neutrality protections are applied equally to both wireline and wireless Internet access.

The group opposes the framework for FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler’s proposed rules, which would allow ISPs to discriminate by creating fast and slow lanes online. To read the comments, visit: http://bit.ly/1njxmYw.

Voices for Internet Freedom is a coalition of nearly 30 organizations advocating for communities of color in the fight to protect Internet freedom from corporate and government discrimination. The coalition is led by the National Hispanic Media Coalition, the Center for Media Justice, Free Press and ColorOfChange.

The following statements are from Voices for Internet Freedom leaders:

"Millions have spoken and the message is clear: Reclassifying Internet Service Providers as common carriers is the only way to ensure that the Internet remains a level playing field for all," said Alex Nogales, president and CEO of the National Hispanic Media Coalition. "Without reclassification, the Internet will be subject to the profit-driven whims of the large corporations that control the pipes. This will harm our free speech, activism, civic participation, education and livelihoods, disproportionately impacting Latinos and other communities who have suffered discrimination at the hands of mainstream media."

"Communities of color understand how critical it is to protect their online digital rights from corporate discrimination," said Joseph Torres, senior external affairs director for Free Press. "People of color are using the Internet to fight and overcome many of the economic, educational and informational barriers that fuel our nation’s growing inequality. We can’t allow the FCC to adopt fake ’Net Neutrality’ rules that turn companies like Comcast, AT&T and Verizon into Internet gatekeepers while relegating people of color to second-class status online."

"Our network believes the open Internet plays a pivotal role in ensuring racial and economic equity in the 21st century," said amalia deloney, policy director for the Center for Media Justice and the Media Action Grassroots Network. "Without a strong legal framework that ensures the benefits of the Internet are broadly shared, our members are forced to navigate a platform that further entrenches and exacerbates harmful disparities. In particular, any devolution of Net Neutrality rules will harm independent artists, musicians and social justice advocates that currently use the open Internet to reach audiences otherwise inaccessible in a heavily corporatized and consolidated media. Without an open Internet, these innovators and entrepreneurs face tremendous barriers to entry that choke their opportunities for creative expression, opportunity, democratic participation and community building."

"Net Neutrality has made the Internet a level playing field for all voices, allowing Black bloggers, activists, and entrepreneurs to flourish online despite being blocked out of ownership and participation in traditional media," said Rashad Robinson, executive director of ColorOfChange."That’s why thousands of ColorOfChange members have raised their voices in demanding strong open Internet protections and calling out deceptive arguments from the telecom lobby. The FCC must protect the open Internet if it wants to protect diversity online."

The comments were also filed on behalf of more than 50 of our nation’s most influential grassroots groups, artists, media makers and public interest groups, as well as many of our nation’s largest Latino organizations.

House Backs Permanent Ban on Internet Access Taxes

The U.S. House of Representatives voted on Tuesday to ban permanently taxes on Internet access, a prohibition that is now temporary and is set to expire in 16 weeks.

In a move opposed by some Democrats and state and local governments, the House approved a bill to bar permanently state and local governments from enacting Internet connection taxes.

The approval came on a voice vote, sending the legislation next to the Senate, where it also has bipartisan support.

The bill does not involve state sales taxes on online shopping purchases, which is a different issue. Rather, the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act deals with Internet access.

Congress in 1998 approved a temporary moratorium on state and local governments imposing any new taxes on Internet connections. This ban has been extended three times, most recently in 2007, but is set to expire on Nov. 1.

Thousands To Lose Their Jobs at Microsoft

Microsoft will soon announce a massive round of layoffs, according to a new report from Bloomberg. Thousands of employees will be let go as Microsoft looks to integrate the devices and services business it recently acquired from Nokia. The report says that the reductions could be announced as soon as this week, and it could be Microsoft s biggest ever round of layoffs, topping the 5,800 cuts it made five years ago in 2009.

Bloomberg says that while the majority of the job cuts will impact new employees that came over from Nokia following the recent handset division acquisition, other areas of Microsoft will be impacted as well. Specifically, the report says divisions of Microsoft that overlap with Nokia s devices business will see cuts, as will Microsoft s marketing and engineering divisions.

The news of imminent layoffs at Microsoft comes less than a week after new CEO Satya Nadella issued the company s new manifesto.

Microsoft Launches A Price Assault on Chromebooks

Microsoft is aiming straight for Google s Chromebooks this holiday season. At the company s partner conference today, Microsoft COO Kevin Turner revealed that HP is planning to release a $199 laptop running Windows for the holidays. Turner didn t provide specifications for HP s "Stream" device, but he did detail $249 laptop options from Acer and Toshiba. Acer s low-cost laptop will ship with a 15.6-inch screen and a 2.16GHz Intel Celeron processor, and Toshiba s includes a 11.6-inch display. It appears that Intel s Celeron chips will help Microsoft s PC partners push out cheaper devices in the race to the bottom.

Turner also revealed that HP is planning to release 7- and 8-inch versions

of its new "Stream" PCs for $99 this holiday season, both running versions of Windows. "We are going to participate at the low-end," says Turner. "We ve got a great value proposition against Chromebooks, we are not ceding the market to anyone." Microsoft has been gradually cutting Windows license costs to allow PC makers to reduce their device prices, and it s clear the software maker is taking the Chromebook threat even more seriously this year. While Microsoft has attempted to undermine Chromebooks previously, competitive pricing will likely have a bigger chance of stemming any threat from Google s laptops. Microsoft will just have to ensure that its PC partners don t turn this pricing opportunity into a second round of underpowered Netbooks, otherwise the simplicity and performance of Chrome OS might just tempt holiday shoppers away from Windows.

Who Inherits Your Facebook When You Die?

A group of influential US lawyers says it has an answer to the question of what should happen to Facebook, Yahoo, Gmail and other online accounts when a person dies.

The Uniform Law Commission, whose members are appointed by state governments to help standardise state laws, was expected to endorse a plan to automatically give loved ones access to a deceased person’s digital accounts, unless otherwise specified in a will. To become law in a US state, the legislation would have to be adopted by the state’s legislature. But if it does, designating such access could become an important tool in estate planning, allowing people to decide which accounts should die when they do.

The plan is likely to frustrate some privacy advocates, who say people shouldn’t have to draft a will to protect sensitive information.

"This is something most people don’t think of until they are faced with it. They have no idea what is about to be lost," said Karen Williams, who sued Facebook for access to her 22-year-old son Loren’s account after he died in a 2005 motorcycle accident.

The question of what to do with one’s "digital assets" is as big as America’s electronic footprint.

Grieving relatives want access for sentimental reasons, and to settle financial issues. A person’s online musings, photos and videos - such as a popular cooking blog or a gaming avatar that has acquired a certain status online - also can be worth money. Imagine the trove of digital files being amassed by someone of historical value - say former President Bill Clinton or musician Bob Dylan - and what those files might fetch on an auction block.

"Our email accounts are our filing cabinets these days," said Suzanne Brown Walsh, a Cummings & Lockwood attorney who chaired the drafting committee on the bill. But "if you need access to an email account, in most states you wouldn’t get it."

Ginger McCall, associate director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, said a judge’s approval should be needed to protect the privacy of both the owners of accounts and the people who communicate with them.

"The digital world is a different world" than offline, McCall said. "No one would keep 10 years of every communication they ever had with dozens or even hundreds of other people under their bed."

Most people assume they can decide what happens by sharing certain passwords with a trusted family member, or even making those passwords part of their will. But in addition to potentially exposing passwords when a will becomes public record, anti-hacking laws and most company's "terms of service" agreements prohibit anyone from accessing an account that isn't theirs. That means loved ones technically become criminals if they log on to a dead person's account.

Several tech providers have come up with their own solutions. Facebook, for example, will "memorialise" accounts by allowing already confirmed friends to continue to view photos and old posts. Google, which runs Gmail, YouTube and Picasa Web Albums, offers its own version: If a person doesn't log on after a while, their accounts can be deleted or shared with a designated person. Yahoo users agree when signing up that their account expires when they do.

But the courts aren't convinced that a company supplying the technology should get to decide what happens to a person's digital assets. In 2005, a Michigan probate judge ordered Yahoo to hand over the emails of a Marine killed in Iraq after his parents argued that their son would have wanted to share them.

Likewise, a court eventually granted Williams access to her son's Facebook account, although she says the communications appeared to be redacted.

What Happens to Your Online Accounts When You Die?

You've probably decided who gets the house or that family heirloom up in the attic when you die. But what about your email account and all those photos stored online?

Grieving relatives might want access for sentimental reasons, or to settle financial issues. But do you want your mom reading your exchanges on an online dating profile or a spouse going through every email?

The Uniform Law Commission, whose members are appointed by state governments to help standardize state laws, on Wednesday endorsed a plan that would give loved ones access to but not control of the deceased's digital accounts, unless specified otherwise in a will.

To become law in a state, the legislation would have to be adopted by the legislature. If it did, a person's online life could become as much a part of estate planning as deciding what to do with physical possessions.

"This is something most people don't think of until they are faced with it. They have no idea what is about to be lost," said Karen Williams of Beaverton, Oregon, who sued Facebook for access to her 22-year-old son Loren's account after he died in a 2005 motorcycle accident.

The question of what to do with one's "digital assets" is as big as America's electronic footprint. A person's online musings, photos and

videos such as a popular cooking blog or a gaming avatar that has acquired a certain status online can be worth considerable value to an estate. Imagine the trove of digital files for someone of historical or popular note say former President Bill Clinton or musician Bob Dylan and what those files might fetch on an auction block.

"Our email accounts are our filing cabinets these days," said Suzanne Brown Walsh, a Cummings & Lockwood attorney who chaired the drafting committee on the proposed legislation. But "if you need access to an email account, in most states you wouldn't get it."

But privacy activists are skeptical of the proposal. Ginger McCall, associate director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, said a judge's approval should be needed for access, to protect the privacy of both the owners of accounts and the people who communicate with them.

"The digital world is a different world" from offline, McCall said. "No one would keep 10 years of every communication they ever had with dozens or even hundreds of other people under their bed."

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Likewise, a court eventually granted Williams, the Oregon mother, access to her son's Facebook account, although she says the communications appeared to be redacted.

Enter the Uniform Law Commission. According to the proposal, the personal representative of the deceased, such as the executor of a will, would get access to but not control of a person's digital files so long as the deceased didn't prohibit it in the will. The law would trump access rules outlined by a company's terms of service agreement, although the representative would still have to abide by other rules including copyright laws.

That means, for example, a widow could read her deceased husband's emails but couldn't send emails from that account. And a person could access music or video downloads but not copy the files if doing so violated licensing agreements.

Williams said she supports letting people decide in their wills whether accounts should be kept from family members.

"I could understand where some people don’t want to share everything," she said in a phone interview this week. "But to us, losing him (our son) unexpectedly, anything he touched became so valuable to us." And "if we were still in the era of keeping a shoebox full of letters, that would have been part of the estate, and we wouldn’t have thought anything of it."

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